

Washington, DC -- Congressman DeFazio (D-Springfield) today voted for H.R. 1348, the Unemployment Compensation Act of 2009. The legislation will extend unemployment benefits for an additional 13 weeks for workers in high unemployment states who are about to run out of benefits. The bill passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 330 to 83. In August, the national unemployment rate increased to 9.7 percent – the highest level in 26 years.

. In Oregon, the unemployment rate is the third highest in the nation at 12 percent, with a number of counties approaching 20 percent.

“This extension is a much needed boost for struggling families and our ailing economy,” DeFazio said. “Unemployment insurance provides targeted and effective stimulus. These critical benefits will increase consumer spending in sluggish local economies and help families make ends meet.”

H.R. 1348 will provide immediate assistance, extending relief to an estimated 314,000 workers nationally and 5,000 in Oregon. Their benefits would be exhausted by the end of the month without this extension. By the end of the year, this legislation will benefit over 11,000 Oregonians and one million people nationally whose benefits would have otherwise run out. Extending these benefits is one of the most cost-effective and fast-acting ways to stimulate the economy because the money is spent quickly. According to the Congressional Budget Office, every \$1 spent on unemployment benefits generates \$1.64 in new economic activity. Furthermore, this legislation will not add to the federal deficit. It will instead extend, for one additional year, the 30 year old federal unemployment tax and require better reporting on the start date of newly hired employees to reduce unemployment insurance overpayments.